The ROUND ROBIN

A Bulletin of Contact and Information for Students of Psychic Research and Parapsychology.

Published by N. Meade Layne, M.A.
Three-Six-One-Five Alexia Place,
SAN DIEGO, 4, California.

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- GREETINGS -

WE EXTEND HOLIDAY GREETINGS TO ALL OUR READERS – HAPPINESS AND GOOD FORTUNE NOT ONLY FOR THIS SEASON BUT FOR THE YEAR AND ALL OTHER YEARS TO COME.

This is Number 11 of volume I of the Round Robin (the first was in February, '45), and because it is the Christmas-time edition we have largely abandoned, for this one issue, the usual make-up of the Bulletin. There are few comments or criticisms, or synopses or reviews, little in the way of occult happenings or Fortean data, few if any insults to our betters. The material we substitute for these is in a different vein. We hope it will not be wholly unacceptable, or at worst considered as only a temporary change. At this season the mood of most of us is a little different. Some of us are very thankful and happy, others are filled with sorrow for missing faces and because of memories of times past - but few of us are likely to be of a critical, studious and investigative turn of mind. This latter, on

the whole, is the mood of the Round Robin, and so for the nonce we put it aside. Pilgrims of Eternity are we all, and here is one more milestone on our journey. May our dry staves put forth leaves for every one of us!

[2]

- Of the Making of Comparisons -

Let us make no comparisons - as, of our own lot with that of others - for these breed pride and folly, or else envy and long unhappiness. Let each of us consider rather, how to walk rightly upon his own path and how best to aid the unfortunate, that the cosmic purposes may be more perfectly performed in him.

At the moment when we look downward with condescension, let us look upward also to those far wiser than ourselves. At the moment when we look upward with envy, let us look downward with compassion upon those less fortunate. When we condemn the lawlessness of others, let us consider also the passions of our own souls.

Make no comparisons save these only; to desire the wisdom of the wise and the power of right service, and to discern the sorrows of those less fortunate, to the end that you may give them comfort. Make no comparisons save those only whereby you may learn, and serve, and so work the will of that Higher Self within whom you dwell, and who is named by some the Holy Guardian Angel.

The voice of the Angel is that of our deepest instincts, and best judgement and will and insight when we reflect upon our acts. But tomorrow, or after many days, this Self may judge differently and with higher wisdom, and afterward must in its own turn suffer judgment. Thus (and if we hide not our eyes) there is a Self which unfolds continually, and moves before us like a beckoning light.

Strindberg has written: "The whole problem of life consists in not turning one's back upon the Light." This Light is the principle of growth, the upward gravitation of the mind and soul and spirit of man. And the denial of this Light is the true sin against the Holy Ghost . . . We deny it when we say "My judgment is perfect, and this is the whole truth which I possess" - when we make a God of consistency in ignorance,

saying "There are few or none from whom I learn." This is as if the child in embryo or the germ in the seed should say, "I have come to the end of all that is possible for me."

We deny the Light when we make the black comparisons of pride and envy; we turn toward the Light by making the white comparisons of right aspiration, yet continually seeking that the wisdom of our desires may become more perfect.

[3]

- DARK WEEPING -

How fierce must be the anguish of the spirit
When even its enemy the body grieves!
Within that vasty hemisphere of sleep
Are sorrows greater than waking has ever known,
Than Deirdre dead, Andromache a slave,
Than fallen cities, or even the crucifixion
Of the Saviours. Their death was victory.
The Vedic seers had a more grandiose tale
Of what lay in the secrecy of sleep,
The soul gone into itself, its gates
Barred on the world, earth's magic stilled within
The sleepy mind, the candles of dream all blown.
When sleep is dreamless the gold-gleaming Genius
Awakens, immortal, laughing, so they say
Making beauty, chariots, dance and song,
Cities and palaces and lamps in heaven,
And meadows for the dancing feet, of lakes
Gaudy with light, or flaring forest glades
Where wind-bewildered the mad sun-fire reels
And rainbow tinted the lovely Dryads whirl
In carnival, a lustrous mirage, forever

Glowing and changing at the heart's desire,
As if the Arabian Genii were its slaves,
And after that glorying in beauty and power
The Genius becomes inexpressibly old
Returning into the Ancient of Days. It must
As the diver under deep water must
Rise to the air for life, so every night
The Soul must rise and go unto its Father
For a myriad instant breathing eternity,
And then returning by the way it came
It wakes here to renew its cyclic labors.

A.E. (G.W.Russell) in
The Irish Statesman.

[4]

- MEDITATION AGAINST SORROW -

"How then shall he enter into a lysting with the Sorrow of Death? What armour shall hee wear and what speare carry for the Overcoming of so Grete and Dredful an Adversarie?"

So wrote the old essayist, speaking as if from the solitude of his own grief, and voicing in his own way an age-old question. There is indeed an Adversary who seems to laugh at all consolations, and against whom no weapon and no armor gives true defense.

We have lost one who is most dear to us, and we hear the words of friends who would comfort us, and are grateful to them. We hear and repeat the phrases of clergyman and priest, and the prayers of Holy Church, and the comforting promises of the Book of Books. We recall the resignation of philosophers, and admit the practical counsels of the worldly-wise and the usefulness of daily duties.

But in the stillness of night Sorrow is our visitant. There is a garment of loneliness for the slowly passing hours. There remains that loss for which there is no gain, the separation which has no earth reunion, a shadow in which all comfort of

light is uncertain, and a despair in which hope is as a reed shaken by the winds of darkness.

This is true of the many, though it is not so for all. But each of us in his own way must suffer, and despair or be comforted, and in his own way and degree find a measure of acceptation, and of wisdom and of peace.

Life must go on with us, after its fashion - after our own fashion, that is to say, flowing into our moulds of thought and feeling and daily acts. Tasks and duties remain to us, and the healing pursuits of service for the lightening of the burdens of others.

We work, we become silent, we speak little of the one who has departed because it seems better so. We speak of him seldom but we do not forget. The years will somewhat dull the sharpness of this thrust, but our love is not dimmed by them.

But how shall we enter the lists against sorrow in these present hours? What armor shall we wear and what spear carry?

The weapons against sorrow which are known to all, are faith, and hope, and resignation, and also the busyness of life, and duties and interests, and the power to carry on with these; and the power to put aside the useless and melancholy thought. Slowly, little by little we make use of these, and the compulsions of the world will not have it otherwise.

But there is yet another weapon and other armor, more powerful than those we have named. It is called Right Knowledge, and the wisdom which flows from it. It has been a human possession from most ancient time, and it lies at hand today as it has done in ages past. It is knowledge, and not faith and belief only. It is known truth and not dogma.

It is knowledge, and not faith only, that those we call dead are alive, and in [5] fullness of life, and in freedom from pain and all sorrow, save only that which comes to them from knowledge of our own grief. It is knowledge, and not alone the authority of priest or Book, of cult or creed or mystical tradition. And it is ours on the same terms as any other knowledge - the willingness to learn and the effort to acquire.

If our minds are rooted in denial and ignorance, in adverse dogmas and facile scepticism and the shallowness of common thinking, we cannot acquire this security. But that is equally true of the ten thousand wonders of the physical sciences. We shall come by our own measure of truth and knowledge when we look for it, in the right spirit and by right methods. Knock, and it shall be opened to you - seek, and ye shall find. There is a right way of seeking, and a right portal by which to enter the House of Wisdom.

You young men in your tens of thousands who have gone to your death in war, in battle or by disease or accident - and all you others dear to us, who have also passed from our sight in many ways - know that we grieve for you, and that you will never be forgotten. But know also that we rejoice for you, since you have entered into a fullness of life and happiness beyond our true conception, and since pain and disaster no longer threaten you, but eternal vistas of wisdom and useful service are opening to your vision.

And we know that you can hear our words, and visit us, and sometimes we also can hear and see, and receive the messages you send; and in a little while we shall be with you again.

This knowledge, ancient as the world and builded on facts continually verified, is still despised and neglected by the multitude; nevertheless it is the most important knowledge accessible to mankind, its final acceptance is certain, and in it lie the true sanctions of right conduct, of hope, and courage, and true religion. It is this which is at once armor and weapon against sorrow, and against fear, and for the overthrowing of the Adversary who bears their names.

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Now since this life our nonage is,
And we in wardship to thine Angels be,
Native in heaven's faire palaces
Where we shall be but denizened by thee,
As the earth conceiving by the Sunne
Yeelds faire diversitie,
Yet never knowes which course that light doth run,
So let mee study, that mine actions be
Worthy their sight, though blinde in how they see.

(John Donne)

- CROSS-ROADS FOR HUMANITY -

We are aware that mankind has always hopefully expected the worst, and that vast catastrophes, and especially the end of the world, have been wrongfully predicted so often, that most people have given up the idea and decided they will have to pay the rent after all. So, for ourselves, we shall not predict the world's end, because even if right we would gain no kudos - and if wrong, who wants to be derided? But, as if in a glass darkly, we envision certain possibilities.

We believe that man has now learned enough about destruction, so that he is going to have to learn how to live in peace and amity. If he does not, there will really be a war to end all wars, war-makers and war-haters together.

We have always maintained that human conduct is governed only by self interest - and that true self interest (which is SELF interest) lies in the practise of the Christian virtues, and especially in the service of our fellows. Since the ideal of service is the negation of greed and selfishness and war, it is evident that the race is going to become much more peaceful and virtuous - or else! Self interest and the Christian virtues are finally to be in some measure identified.

This is, undoubtedly, the kind of virtue inculcated in childhood by use of the hair brush, later by the police, and the philosophers tell us it's not really a moral attitude, because based on fear rather than on choice. But whether imitation or genuine, we shall do well to acquire it if the joie de vivre still means anything to us.

Our guess is, there will have to be some frightful catastrophe before the moral implications of atomic energy really become plain to us. So far, the masses of mankind simply don't believe in it, or them. So, force majeure is probably the only argument we shall listen to.

In another place, in this issue of RR, we have said something about the probable unfoldment of psychic or astral perception. There is an intimate connection between such unfoldment, and these virtues of service and of wisdom.

And there are many signs, now carefully considered by students of occult matters, that some change is imminent in human consciousness - some lowering of the thresholds of perception. Or it may be, that spirit communication by instrumental means is not far off.

The development of astral vision, or hearing, or telepathic communication, would repeat in the mental realm a situation and dilemma similar to that created in social and political relations by the threat of atomic energy. Those who can learn, can accept, and can make right use of the new knowledge will survive. Even instrumental communication with spirits, once established as undeniable, will compel, as by superior force, a reordering of our ways of thought, of science, philosophy, psychology, religion - and especially of human conduct, since moral action will acquire all the sanctions of plainly seen consequences.

It is strange that human progress - if that word has meaning - should take these forms. We mean the command "live rightously or perish," and also "accept this truth of survival, and of the consequences of acts, and live by it, or perish through your ignorance and the energies you have evoked." We suggest that in this convergence of factors, stupendous consequences lie hid - that it is no mere historical accident.

Readers of the Round Robin, let us consider these things together, and also in the solitude of our own hearts!

WAITING

Serene, I fold my hands and wait,
  Nor care for wind, or tide, or sea;
I rave no more 'gainst Time or Fate,
  For lo! my own shall come to me.

I stay my haste, I make delays,
  For what avails this eager pace?
I stand amid the eternal ways
  And what is mine shall know my face.

Asleep, awake, by night or day,
The friends I seek are seeking me;
No wind can drive my bark astray,
Nor change the tide of destiny.

What matter if I stand alone?
I wait with joy the coming years;
My heart shall reap where it hath sown,
And garner up its fruit of tears.

The waters know their own, and draw
The brook that springs in yonder height;
So flows the good with equal law
Unto the soul of pure delight.

The stars come nightly to the sky;
The tidal wave unto the sea;
Nor time, nor space, nor deep, nor high
Can keep my own away from me.

(John Burroughs)

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- AWAKENING -

To Waken in the morning, feeling,
saying
"Surely last night I walked in
heavenly places,
"Or whence this peace that passes
understanding?

"This rootless knowledge that the
dawn-light brings
"That though all life is wry, all
life goes well,
"Bears dear though undeciphered

signature -
"Surely I walked and talked with
those I love!

To Waken in the morning, feeling, speaking
Soft to one's self after this foolish fashion,
Has more in it than gray Philosophy
Spins on the pages of her thousand books.

[8]

- BENEATH WHAT STARS -

(The Letter of the Occultist Fr. I.N.A. to his Friend M.L.)

. . . . . It is in my mind to tell you, my dear L., about a recent experience of mine, though I do not find it easy to set down on paper, on account of my lack of skill in writing of such matters. But first I must say that though I recognize it in my own mind as a genuine astral experience, I cannot offer any convincing argument. My consciousness remained clear and I was able to direct all my acts by an effort of will, which, as you know, is not characteristic of dreams. But on the other hand, the experience began while I was at the border of sleep, and so lacks the assurance of conscious experiment. Just previously, however, I had been contemplating the Tattva of Air, intent on entering that Elemental Kingdom, and though the effort failed, it was no doubt partly the cause of all that followed. After meditating for nearly an hour on the Tattva, without any great success, I felt myself growing drowsy, and stretched myself out on the couch for a short sleep.

Almost in a moment, it seemed to me, I found myself on a narrow road or cart track, which wound through a rolling and open countryside, marked here and there with scattered groups of trees, in a night which was moonless but abundantly star-lit. There were present also some four or five other persons, whom I knew to be negroes, foot-travellers like myself, and who at once impressed me as being dangerous company. I attach no importance to this part, because the feeling was

somewhat dreamlike and confused. But I recall making a definite effort to escape, by willing myself far ahead of the others. From this moment my consciousness became perfectly clear and my self-control most definite.

I was then in a little cirque of open ground, perhaps fifty yards in diameter, bordered about by trees of medium height. The night was very quiet, with only the faintest stir of wind from the west. I remained motionless, looking all about me, listening, collecting all my faculties and taking good note of everything. During a genuine astral experience one has no doubt as to its nature; afterward, in recollection, it often seems dreamlike; nevertheless one also remembers that it was clear and real at the time, and this is its best criterion. It is very important, it seems to me, to observe everything with the closest attention, and then on return to the body to write down everything that can be recalled. I stood in the open space for several minutes, occupied with such thoughts, not frightened but curious as to why I had been brought to such a place. Then the idea came to me strongly, to try if I could not project myself upward a little way into the air; I had the strong conviction that I would be able to do so, and that it would be a pleasant experience.

How can I describe the delights which then came to me? One rests upon the air as if upon the surface of an invisible sea, easily and naturally as floats a wide-winged bird. I stood upright, but afterward lay at full length, my hands clasped behind my head, feeling only the coolness of the breeze, and the gentle lift and sway [9] of that miraculous couch. The earth, I could not tell how far beneath me, was only a vast dense shadow. I felt no fear, because all my senses were lapped in incredible pleasure; because for a little while I did not think or reflect, but only drifted there in the star-lit darkness between earth and heaven, utterly at ease upon the black scarce-moving tides of air, secure as though I rested upon Everest or Yaanek. I rolled upon the air, and swam in it and drifted with it, and never did fish of the sea or bird of sky take such delight in its element, or Undine or Sylph for that matter, who are not newcomers to their spheres as was I to this. I say that freedom in space alone is like a pleasure of heaven, and enough in itself to lure every earth dweller out of his gross body forever.

After I had luxuriated in this Way for a time I turned over, as I said, on my back, stretched my length upon my couch of air, and put my hands behind my head, and looked up at the stars. If it seems strange that I had not done this first of all, perhaps I was too absorbed in my new delights, or it may be that at that moment the height of air conferred a sudden clarity, for now I saw that the whole semisphere of

heaven was thick strewn with stars, from one horizon to the other, no such glimmering and cloudy lights as we commonly behold, but as with stars of the first magnitude, or greater than this. In the frost-clear air of high mountains or over wide regions of desert one often sees the stars in notable brilliance, but now I saw their number multiplied, and their splendor increased beyond the language of comparisons. An innumerable and close-knit company, they filled the sky as if with the gathering of Gods, and my thought stood still at the beholding of them . . . . .

I must not make too long a story of this, but shall tell how one more wonder was added, after I had lost the vision and then regained it. For in gazing a long time upon these stars I fell into a kind of trance of amazement, and in the midst of it a whisper seemed to come to me, to hold fast to my sense of selfhood and own identity, and not be lifted and utterly lost even in the splendors of the Godhead. And in struggling to do this, and repeating my name to myself, a sudden fear came on me of the Height of Air, and in a few moments I found myself again on the surface of the earth; and in the midst of the same cirque of trees where I had been formerly.

In the astral planes, at least, it seems to me there is nothing to be feared except fear itself, and the consequences to which we are exposed by it; and from this we can see the value of faith, which is no more than unshakable confidence, and makes nearly everything possible. But I was so distressed and vexed by the fall which my wavering had cost me, that (remembering our occult maxim for such occasions) I collected all my mental forces, and again projected myself to the Height.

Whether because of this effort or for some other reason, I at this moment entered a new plane of perception. The multitude and brilliance of the stars was in no way diminished, but their aspect was now different; for now they shone with colored fires, each according to its nature, not weakly as we commonly know them, but with great lights of amethyst, and blue, and of gold and silver, and fire-red, and palest amber, argent and topaz, and emerald. They were most like (to compare great things with small) those great colored stars which are thrown out by rockets, and [10] hang for several minutes against the blackness of the sky; but these I beheld were uncountable in number, and their enduring as for eternity. And now I must add a strange thing, for I set myself to look for the Lords Who Wander, that is, for such of them as our sky should then show, and also for Orion, and Pleiades whom he follows forever, and for Arcturus in Boötes, and Polaris and the Great Bear which

encircles him, and I could find none of them. None at all! Tell me then, my friend, what stars were these I looked upon? Upon what heaven did I gaze, unseen, I think, by any mortal eye than my own?

The effect of this spectacle upon the senses and the spirit is beyond description. I am not, as you know, deeply committed to any faith; we worship Him whose Name is I SHALL BE, we seek the knowledge and the conversation of the Angel, and before Him-of-Whom-Naught-Can-be-Said we cover our faces in silence. Under the Aspectus Spiritus Sancti we worship Him. But to look upon the unveiled splendors of His cosmos is not only to worship; it is something higher or deeper; it is to be exalted, and drawn forth, and surrendered to the tides of Being; it is not to perceive Beauty but to be blent with it - with beauty which fills and overcomes, as harmony fills the ear with sound and beats and vibrates in every part. Beauty as we name it here is a feeble thing; we speak of it in flowers and sunsets and the work of painters and poets; but beauty in the cosmic order is an energy, a Power and a Spirit, it is order and universal harmony, it is the un-folding and in-gathering of the Nameless, it is the Will and the Countenance of God and it is greater than God, for it is the unthinkable and unimaginable Source, even of Him to whom is given the Ineffable Name.

What does the word reality mean, and what is the test of the real? I think it is, for us, only a profound and deep-rooted conviction, to which all our nature responds as truly as one taut string re-echoes to another in its own note. For this reason, this glimpse of the universe of stars is to me a fragment of reality, and no deceitful mirroring of the astral light.

I did not mean to write so much of a matter which could, no doubt, be all put in one short sentence. A matter which, to the millions, is no more than fantasy, or dream, or the inventions of romance. But I hold it to be a hint and foretaste of things possible, of experiences to come, along a Path which I think can be followed by every man, and so is worth repeating to those who can understand. So I send it along to you, for whatever virtue you may find in it . . . . . .

> Ils Micaolz Olprt, Thou Mighty Light, be Thou a Window of Comfort unto us! Move therefore and show Thyself! Open the mysteries of Thy Creation! In Nomine Adonai -

Frater.

- -

We are not other than a moving row
Of magic shadow-shapes that come and go
Around the sun-illumined lantern held
At midnight, by the Master of the Show!

(Omar)

[11]

- VENIT SUMMA DIES -

What will be the effect of free and dependable communication between our earth plane and the world of departed spirits? Such communication is, presumably, what spiritualists anticipate and work for, and it is said to be the ardent desire of a multitude of the invisible ones also.

We are told, and there is reason to believe, that there is an opposition party on the "other side", violently opposed to any form of communication. And we certainly have a great deal of opposition here in our own world, ranging from mere indifference, to the most vicious attack. This is one form of active obscurantism in which all classes off society join hands quite happily. Scientists and philosophers (that is, some of them), "practical" folk, pious and simple-minded folk, religious bigots, intolerant and wilfully ignorant people of all sorts either ignore or deride or attack the idea of spirit communication. Catholicism will have none of it and often crusades against it; Protestant orthodoxy apparently regards it as much too hot to handle, but certainly suspects that the Father of Lies is at the bottom of it. And of course the followers of spiritism are also drawn from many levels of society, and are a numerous and formidable minority, with the whole of the world-old esoteric tradition back of them.

But most of the opposition on "this side" simmers down to two (incompatible) points of view: (1) "It ain't true"; (2) "it's the devil's business."

But suppose we assume, if only for argument, that true communication between the planes can be established. Suppose it were established - we mean, for everybody, in some simple and dependable fashion. Suppose, as many hopeful ones really expect, that scientific experimenters hit on the right wave length, devise the right apparatus - so that talking to "dead folk" is no harder than picking up a phone. Curiously enough, no one starts any arguments about the effects of that, or tries to get bills through State legislatures compelling scientists to lay off the project.

Probably one reason for that is, ignorance and pseudo-science don't dare dignify spiritism that far - to admit there's even a shadow of a possibility of a millimicron of truth in it. Religious fanaticism, of course, being incapable of thought, must be left to its own withering.

Under our supposition, that one could punch a button or two and get his deceased great-aunt "on the wire", all might go well. That would be one-way communication, or if not that, still one wouldn't have to answer if station Astral called up. But suppose the process were not mechanical. Suppose (as many persons expect) there is a general development of involuntary psychism, clairaudience or clairvoyance or telepathic powers, or all of these or an combination of them (we don't know how to distinguish them anyway). Any lowering of the threshold that gave access to astral perception. If that came about rather suddenly (say, in a year, or three or four years) it is plain that some three-fourths of the population would become filberts. Or maybe four-fifths or seven-eighths, since three-fourths of us are said to be filberts already, about something or other.

At this point speculation becomes fascinating. We envision the world-wide spread of Filbertism, the frantic effort to catch all the Filberts, examine them (medical men, psychiatrists, psychologists, most of them somewhat Filbertish themselves), haul them into courts of law (judges, lawyers, D.A.s, juries, [12] commissioners, examiners., D.F.s generally, also becoming Filbertish), get them into asylums, prisons, hospitals, fetters and straight-jackets, anything to make the world safe for non-Filberts, but all to no avail. And as to the religionists -

We have it said "If the Pope should turn Presbyterian, great changes would take place."

For Popes and saints to see spirits, seems to be all right. But if the whole of mankind (except doctors and lawyers, maybe) began to see or hear them, changes might be even greater than under the Presbyterian hypothesis.

What would be the first reaction of religious orthodoxy? Visitation of devils, probably - and so, what an orgy of bell, Book, and candle, or exorcism of countless legions of Imps - and elsewhere, prayers aplenty, and pious exaltations, and holy rollering, and suicides and homicides and all the other familiar filbert reactions. But then maybe, who knows, Orthodoxy might find it a blessed event, millennial forerunner, and so presently adjust itself, accept everything and take credit for everything, declare that it always preached a true spiritism, and-so-forth and fifth . . . .

We hate to leave these speculations, but must get back to our real subject. For that purpose we'll suppose the first shock over, and all the more dangerous Filberts either dead or in confinement. We now have a humanity accepting spirit communication as a commonplace, with perception operating on both sides of the Veil, and some kind of modus vivendi established - for there are means of securing privacy even against ghosties, unless they be of a most superior sort. The question is, Will that be a desirable status, think you - or not?

It is often pointed out, with some show of reason, that since we seem incapable of managing the affairs of our earth plane, the intrusion of another level of existence would be intolerable. The chief use of our five senses, probably, is to shut out nine-tenths of our environment, rather than to give us access to it.

Nevertheless there are millions of people who are often, even habitually aware of supernormal perceptions, and who are just as normal otherwise as anybody else. And all the genuine occultists we have known personally have been rather above the average in practical affairs, besides having an I.Q. at least as high as their blood pressure. To extend either the mental or sensory environment to another plane is no whit different than extending it by travel or study - by science or philosophy, or mythology, or poetry. The prerequisite, of course, is the absence of fear and of crippling dogmatisms, plus proper instruction in elementary psychic facts.

But are we ever going to reach this superior sanity - except by virtue of some threshold lowering such as we have envisioned? Probably not. Is this lowering a possibility, in the light of present-day occult knowledge? We reply, that it is even probable. The effects, however, must depend on (1) the form of the change (2) its rapidity (3) the state of human knowledge and degree of evolution at the time. No one can predict the time of any change in our psychic sensitiveness, but as far as instrumental communication is concerned, many people believe it is near at

hand . . . And if or when this becomes a truly undeniable fact, "great changes" will indeed occur - even surpassing those which might be caused by the Presbyterianism of the Pope.

[13]

- ALDEBARAN IN FAERY -

Waking at midnight, wise Aldebaran
(Learned in all the nine Books of the law,
Light of all disputation) turned and saw
There from his lonely pallet, how the Moon
Swung in a honied crescent, and one star
Glittered alone beneath its amber horn.

All else was velvet darkness, and forlorn
Of any slight of sound, or whispering
Of wind or Wing, or leaf beneath the dew.
Yet such a mystery closed in, he knew
All in a moment, magic was afoot.
The news of it went hurring all around,
The mountain and the meadow were in-put
With ripe enchantment, and the sky and stream.
His was a wakening more fair than dream,
And joy went flowing like a tide at full,
And laughter, or its spirit Worshipful.
And lo, these two were as substantial things,
For he could swim in them as in a sea,
Gather them up with hands of ecstasy,
Taste of them sweetly, breathe them deep as air,
And all the soul of all luxuriousness,
Of richness and rare savour gathered

there,
Heart of the heart of pleasure, though unnamed,
A pulse of timeless notion and delight
Strange and uncaused, and measureless as Night,
An essence and rapt spirit and a flame.

And when the moment or the hour was gone -
"How shall I turn my face to garish things,
"I who would live forever and forever
"There where the clear star swings
"A pendant to the silvern horn of the Moon?
"Strange night, strange land, joy lost too soon!
"Oh, I have eaten of the lotus root!
"How shall I leave my heart in faery land?"

Thus lonely wept the great Aldebaran,
Weary of learning, when the night was late,
Prisoned by Faery there, but here by Fate.

[14]

"THE PLEASURE OF DYING"

* * *

O NOT BE AFRAID OF DEATH. I tell you, it is so wonderful an experience, that life in your world would be worth while if only for the pleasure of dying." These were the words of a materialized spirit. She stood there almost within arm's reach of me, and though the light was dim

I could see her face plainly, the heavy coils of her hair, the details of her gown, the white shoes with their large buckles. She had been speaking for nearly a minute, and the words I have quoted were the last. When they were spoken, the outline of her form began to waver and grow indistinct, the details coalesced, only a vaporous upright column remained. Then this too collapsed, straight downward as if passing through the floor; nevertheless there remained, for a few moments, an indistinct pool of whiteness. This appeared to contract, shrinking in from its circumference to about 9 foot in diameter, then suddenly was gone. The materialization was ended.

I write here for those who have seen such things, under good conditions of observation, or who give weight to the testimony of many competent observers. I am not concerned here with argument and proof, but only with the words of this being, a genuine revenant if ever there was one, a personality and a body which took shape and vanished close before the eyes of twenty observers. Her words are the text of this article, but not because this single spirit uttered them, but because they repeat what has been said ten thousand times, through many different forms of spirit communication, and in the words of seers and clairvoyants the world over.

We take them as text because, though they have been uttered so often, there are millions who have never heard of them, or have heard only with scepticism and indifference, or perhaps with hostility and contempt. And because their importance is such, that the fear of death would depart from mankind if they were believed, and the sorrow of loss would be overborn with joy for the good fortune of the departed. And we repeat them too, because even those of us who believe and understand often grow forgetful, and yield too much to our too-human sorrow, and the folly of our grief is a trouble of the worlds invisible.

"The pleasure of dying." Well, and why not? Spiritualists often object to this word, because it seems to them to imply cessation of being. We can say transition if we prefer, but the words to die need mean no more than that, and in that sense we use them here. The actual dying, the passing-over, is probably not a fact of consciousness at all, any more than is the moment of falling asleep. All the pain and fear belong to life of the dense body, the freedom and happiness are of the life of the spirit. The end of pain, release, escape, new powers, new opportunities, new knowledge; it is in these things that the pleasure of death is found.

It was Andrew Lang who was perplexed by the expression on the countenances of the newly dead, and who at length found a phrase to describe it. "They look," he wrote, "as if they suddenly knew everything." And it is true that for

the most part the expression is that if sudden wisdom, and stillness, and peace.

What actually takes place at the moment of passing has been described many times. It is not exactly the same for everyone, but the most common and essential facts are well known. To have some knowledge of these in advance, to be surrounded by friends who also know about them, then to die peacefully as if falling asleep - all that is very good fortune. One simply becomes conscious, fully awake in the new body, there close beside where the old one lies; guides and friends and loved ones are there to welcome us. To die without knowledge, especially to pass over suddenly is less easy, for there is a time of bewilderment and readjustment. It is a great reproach to our civilization, to our pseudo-culture, that we send forth our [15] young men to war by the million, without, for the great majority, a single word of right knowledge concerning the experience which must come to many of them, and eventually to all.

There are ten thousand things we do not know about life on the astral levels, yet the facts we do know are numerous and important. Perhaps one should mention first what the occultist YRAM calls the "brutal shock" of "incredible reality." Anyone (and there are many) who has achieved astral projection in clear consciousness will bear witness to this. There lies my body, but here am I, in a body equally real! Here are all my familiar surroundings, everything looks the same; it is only when I try to touch something or speak to someone that I notice the difference. If there is a scrap of paper here, or a feather, I cannot move either of them a millimeter; in spite of this it is some time before I realize that I can pass through the wall whenever I wish. Learning about these conditions makes a long story; moreover, they are not quite the some as if the astral cord had been broken. In either case, however, this naturalness and reality of everything is incredible. It is no wonder at all, that the "Dead" man, uninstructed in such matters, cannot believe in what has happened to him. (*)

These new facts, new conditions, the control of the new body, all have to be learned. But this learning, for the normal person at least, is itself a high pleasure. It is the kind of learning required of a prisoner, confined many years in some dim and narrow cell, then suddenly released in new surroundings, he almost has to learn to walk and talk, work and play all over again. It is both a task and a delight. And freedom in space is itself a marvelous thing. And here it should be said that countless spirits are "earthbound", not for their sins or earth affections, but simply because they cannot visualize or concentrate, and have little mental control. If you

can visualize a person or place, and hold the thought steady for a little while, you will find yourself "there"; if you can think of nothing but your home or your office, that is where you will stay, or travel only under the guidance of others, but always one learns, and in time it is this knowledge which sets one free.

There is much real and alleged information about Summerland, and Devachan, and other higher states of being; yet most of us are concerned first of all with what happens to us at death and shortly after. If dying is a marvelous experience, the final delight which makes earth life worth while, let us look for hints of what this may be. We are not going to be translated into the presence of the Archangels, or even soar aloft with wings of our own; if we insist on these things, no doubt we can do much to spoil the real blessings we shall have.

Our immediate reaction, the very first part of our after-death experience, depends on our preparation, expectation, knowledge, and on the nature of our passing over and the state of mind it induces in us. A vast astonishment is apparently the lot of most of us, the shock of incredible reality, of which YRAM speaks. But then, if we are not too stupid and bigoted and obsessed by our own notions, we at once begin to learn. It is a marvelous thing, to realize that pain and fear, and the burden of unpleasant responsibilities, are finally and definitely ended. We shall find other work to do, when we are ready for it and desire it, but meanwhile all the pressures and necessities of earth life have passed away. We cannot buy or sell anything any more; and we make our clothing and could create food if we needed it, by an effort of thought only. The instant responsiveness of astral matter, and of our own bodies to the energy of thought is a continual miracle; what we can do and where we can live depends on our own minds and character; the [16] prestige of wealth, family and social position has vanished forever, and with them all the foolish need and concern for maintaining them.

This sense of freedom, of power, and of limitless possibilities gives the new life its supreme values; but at the same time its continuity with our present life is all important. Death works no change in human character; what we are and what we desire remain the same, until vicious and foolish desires burn themselves out through frustration. In this world, character and mental equipment largely determine our status; in the world to come they are perhaps the sole determinants. Here, we constantly deceive our fellows, but hereafter no deception will be possible.

We have certain ideas and standards of right and wrong, good and evil, and many of these are very foolish. We shall find that these distinctions persist, but that we shall have to change many of our ideas concerning them.

What is Morality, or "right" conduct - and do these words have any meaning outside of our own narrow world of human action? The fact seems to be, that something in the nature of a moral principle is operative in the universe. The religionist may call it the will of God if he chooses, or we can say only that there is a principle of evolution, of directional change, and that the cosmos seems, so to speak, to be "going somewhere". The act or desire which conforms to this movement is "good" and "morality" is the intelligent selection of acts which further our own highest development. We are, for the most part, too ignorant to select wisely; the all-important thing is always to desire the right choice, and constantly to try for better understanding.

These contrasts of Good and Bad, Right and Wrong persist, so far as our knowledge goes, in every plane where human personality still functions. We shall not become all-wise or learn all the purposes of God by the easy device of death, nevertheless the winds of the astral plane will blow many mists away. To such glimpses of right knowledge and revaluation of values, the transition of death is the only gateway.

"The pleasure of dying"! Well, it is perhaps the most choice irony of Nature, that for thousands of years we human-folk have wept above our dead, and counted them as lost to us, and uttered prayer and lamentation before Gods innumerable, for our own peace and for the souls of the departed. And that all the while these vanished ones, or at least a mighty company of them, had not departed at all, but were close beside us, in our homes, and in all the streets of our cities; no phantom-thin and ghostly folk, but strong, alive, vital, busy, and happy, looking forward to the day when we should join them.

"How stupid it is of you," said the spirit whom I quoted at the beginning, "to speak of us as dead! We're not only alive, but we're a HUNDRED TIMES MORE ALIVE THAN YOU FOLKS ARE."

M. L.

* * * *

It is very seldom that we print excerpts from personal letters to the editor without permission of the writer, explicit or implied. Here however comes Corporal Eric K. Olsen, writing from far-off Korea in commendation of the Round Robin, and we are going to repeat part of what he says:

> Is the Round Robin doing any good for the cause of psychic and occult studies? I would say definitely, yes! All the publications of this kind I have received are, in a sense, finished. Their material may be new to the individual mind, but all of it is, in a way, proved. You find something new, you publish it, you ask for comments from readers who experiment. Just asking for comments is enough to get some to try, and with each attempt comes some new knowledge, if only to the individual. For instance, vitality globules . . . . I never heard of them before . . . The R.R. is worth its weight in gold; don't let it go under.

It is this kind of encouragement and thoughtful comment that keeps the RR going; if we published it for profit there would have been just two issues, in one - the first and the last.

Corporal Olsen ends his letter with a question that plumbs the Ultima Thule of philosophy. We summarize it, for lack of space, and of course can't answer it, but have a few sentences of comment.

> We are told that all is of God, and the human soul a part of God - that it gradually gains perfection until it escapes incarnation and attains union with God. The time will come, then, when the earth as a stepping stone to perfection will no longer be needed, and the Godhead will be, as it were, complete. Then what? And when the cycle of reincarnation is completed, what happens next?

One can only say, "the teaching runs thus and so." It is said that the ultimate creative Somewhat moves into manifestation; Brahm awakens from his slumber, and the universe and all contained therein comes into being. (Or, if one prefers, in the primal magnetic field there is a concentering of energy, a balance and interlocking of stresses, the appearance of the first units of matter at these nodes). But this wakening and Day of Brahm is not eternal. When the cosmic process ends, the Manvantara finished, all is withdrawn again into the primal stillness of his sleep. It is the Twilight of the Gods. But this slumber and quiescence also end. Once again

the universe awakens, the cosmic process begins anew. Does the Monad, the Divine Spark, retain its identity and reappear? We do not know that even the Ancient Wisdom speaks with authority on this.

But let us note that all this "answer" is from the standpoint of our earth-consciousness; that is to say, it is uttered in terms of Time, the mystery, the unknowable. What is time on the other planes, or in the cosmic consciousness? Not what it is to us, quite surely. Though our minds put such questions, it is probable that they are not true questions because not rational, not answerable.

[18]

CREDO

God said to Man - The desire
Of your loves shall be beaten as fire
Is beaten to dust.
And the pride of life and the lust
Of power shall be counted as loss
And your gold shall be counted as dross
And the strength of heart and of brain
Be reckoned as vain
As the strength of the sinewy hand,
As the ridge of the salt sea sand
When the waves roll in from the deep
When the tides of night and of sleep
Draw the soul to their keep.
Yet one thing is denied to thee never;
The desire and the patient endeavor
To lighten the load and the pain
Of another, thy brother, with gain
Of share in my purpose that runs
Through the deeps of the dark and the
suns;
With the infinite gains of the soul
That has learned to envision the Whole,

To think with the thought of My mind ~
Lose self, and so find.

* * *

FOR VIOLET by DOUGLAS AINSLIE

Open the map, my dear, and seek the lands
That have filled the horn of fame;
How small by them the space where glory stands,
Greece and the Roman name!
God's mulberry tree with veined and fissured leaves
Let one fall in the sea,
And of its fibers, lo, the silkworm weaves
The loveliest webs that be.
Plato and Phidias are those weavers called,
Their web is Grecian art
And by it are the eyes of the world enthralled
And by the eyes the heart

Now turn to heaven and view the suns that burn,
Immensities of fire,
And 'round them see the planets that must turn
In well-controlled desire.

How small by them our earth! Yet earth, perchance,
Has the mightier destiny,
Is the Athens of the angels; and God's glance
seeks earth most lovingly.

* * * *

- CHRISTMAS 1945 -

"It's a lonesome Christmas" said father Brown
As he laid the fork and the carver down,
And turned his head for a moment aside,
And the mother knew he was trying to hide
The shine of a tear in his dimming eye.
It never will do for folk to cry
At a burdened table on Christmas Day,
But he thought of the words he could not say:

Son of my blood whose body lies
Under the arch of alien skies!
Why are you far and far away?

(He did not turn at the answer clear,
"Father of mine, I am waiting here,
"Close and close for the love we bear!")

And the mother bent her graying head
And heard in her heart the words he said
In the years foregone - "Don't worry for me!
I'll travel the land and sail the sea
And come back safe as safe can be!"
Oh, sorrow, sorrow on Christmas Day!
But she did not hear the soldier say

"Mother of mine, I am here, am here!
Free from sorrow and pain and fear,
Close to the heart of your love alway!"

She did not hear, but her lifted eyes
Widened with grace of a strange surmise,
And she turned her face to the vacant chair
And stretched her arms to the soldier there,
Welcomed home from the wars at last,
When the faith that was born of her wisdom

passed
Into perfect knowledge and happiness -
God bless us all with an equal grace!

A SELECTION
Of Round Robin Articles from
Recent Issues

NOVEMBER (../n10/index.html) : The Motives of Right Conduct . . . Occult Teaching Concerning Spiritualism . . . Professor Murphy on Field Theory and Survival . . . Telepathic Experiments (from Light) . . . Psychology for Everbody . . . The Akashic Screen . . . the Autonomous Field Theory . . . Ritual Form for the Invocation of the Higher Consciousness . . . Cases of Evidence for Identity.

OCTOBER (../n09/index.html) : Mediumship and Morals . . . Cases for Identity . . . Graveyard Ghosts (Occult Review) . . . Draysoniana (Nineteenth Century) . . . Mind and Matter (Aryan Path) . . . Dr Purucker's Lecture (Theosophical Forum) . . . Mind Digest for September . . . Society for Radiesthesis . . . Browne Landone (Psychic Observer) . . . Who Was Houdini (Spiritualist Leader) . . . Rumpus Brewing (anti-spiritualism) . . . Vitality Globules Again . . . Professor Pratt Regrets . . . Eggs-on-End Follies . . . The Casual Triteness of Mme. Curie . . . Fire Over Arkansas . . . Need for a New Devil (Nineteenth Century) . . . Universal Station (book review) . . .

SEPTEMBER (../n08/index.html)	:	The Modern Man . . . Occult Review for July . . . What? No Mystery! . . . Hibbert Journal Article (review) . . . California Society for Psychic Research . . . With the Periodicals (4 pages) . . . Experiments for Amateurs . . . Tennessee Mystery . . . Mediumship of Mirabelli . . . Secret Places of the Heart (Edgar Cayce on the Aura) . . . Concerning False Prophets . . . Vivisections Deferred (critical note) . . . Reincarnation Again . . . Memorial Day (verse) . . . Otz Chiim, the Qabalistic Tree of Life (diagram and notes) . . . This-n-That Page.
August (../n07/index.html)	:	Prospice, 1945 (and shapes of passing things) . . . The Razor of Occam . . Fire over Almeria . . . Mysteries of the Altitudes . . . Comments from Readers . . . How Do We Know (clairvoyant contradictions) . . . True Story of Mr Roberts (from Max Heindel) . . . Excursus Philosophicus (the Qabalistic Absolute) . . . Alreutz Will-Board . . . A.R.E. Activities ("Cayce Foundation") . . . Mediumship of Mirabelli . . . the "Reparation" of Mr DeFord . . . Song of the South Gate Holder . . . Wanted, a Roadbuilder . . . Round Robin Proposes.

- And in earlier numbers -

Vitality Globules - Researches of Dr Haley - Carbon Force - Mediumship of Kluski and Mirabelli - Prayer of the Sylphs - Psycho-Kinetic Effects - Shadow or Substance - The Cayce Clairvoyance - Anybody's Halo - Poltergeister Meiber - Psychic Fasting - Kluski Mediumship - Conditional Immortality - Dr Reynolds on Ghosts - Winchester House - Bed Time Story for Adults - Idioplastic Production of Foods - Seance Memoranda - Hail, Blythe Spirit (Poltergeists) - PK

Effects - Is Psychic Research Worth While - Simple Simon Hears Things (Trumpet Voice) - Psycho-Physical Theories - St. Odile - House of Mystery - Postulates of Occultism - Precognitive Telepathy - Spectral Appendectomy - Spiritons . . .

Many reviews of books and magazine articles, occasional verse, odd items and facts of interest in the Fortean vein.

* * *

- ADDRESSES -

DOUBT (Fortean Society Magazine). Box 192, Grand Central Annex, N.Y.C.

Harbinger of Light. Adelaide, Australia. (Bobbitt Agency)

HIBBERT JOURNAL. 178 Tremont St., Boston.

Journal of Parapsychology. Duke University Press, Durham, N.G.

JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR PSYCHICAL RESEARCH. 40 E. 34th St. New York 16, N.Y.

Light. 16 Queensbury Place, So. Kensington, Lon. S.W.7 (Bobbitt Agency)

MIND DIGEST. York, Penna.

OCCULT REVIEW, Rider, Lon. (Agency)

National Spiritualist. 765 Oakwood Blvd., Chicago 15, Ill.

PREDICTION. Link House, 24 Store St., Lon. W.G.1 (Agency)

Psychic Observer. Dale News Inc., Box 92, Lily Dale, N.Y.

THEOSOPHICAL FORUM, Covina, Calif.

(The Bobbitt Agency, 1609-10th Ave., Nashville 8, Tenn., sells sample copies of psychic and spiritistic periodicals and accepts subscriptions).

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The following mimeographed. booklets are for sale by Talk of the Times, Box 128, San Diego 4, Calif.

GEOMANCY - The Art of Divination by the Element of Earth. An ancient and curious divinatory mode still employed in various occult Orders, easily learned, and highly esteemed by many students. Interesting, whether you believe in divination or not - and no other separate treatise now print. Compiled by Editor of the Round Robin. 8½ x 11", 24 pp. $2.00 postpaid.

LETTERS TO A SOLDIER. 4th printing, reduced in size but nothing omitted. Despite its title, this is not a war publication only; it is a very simple and direct explanation of what happens at the time of death, according to the consensus of esoteric knowledge. The second part of the booklet is a simplified summary of basic ideas found in occultism and spiritism. No propaganda, but a good first book for persons unfamiliar with occult modes of thinking. By the Round Robin Editor. 5 x 8", 35 pp, with reading list. $1.00, or 3 copies for $2.00.

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